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SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

The Epistles from the Yearly-Meeting

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THE  
EPISTLE  
FROM THE  
Yearly-Meeting

Of *Friends and Brethren*, held in *London*, by  
Adjournment, from the 10th Day of the  
Fourth Month, to the 14th Day of the same,  
inclusive, 1728.

*To the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings of Friends  
and Brethren in Great Britain and elsewhere.*

*Dear Friends and Brethren,*

I N the pure Love of that Eternal Truth, whereby we have been gathered to be a People, we tenderly salute You, having renewed Occasion in great Humility, to bless the Name of our gracious God, whose continued Goodness we have been favoured with at this our Annual Meeting; and throughout the Affairs thereof, have been conducted in Meekness of WISDOM and true Brotherly Condescension, to our mutual COMFORT and EDIFICATION. Salutation:

BY Accounts from the Quarterly Meetings in *England* and *Wales*, as also by Epistles from *Scotland*, *Ireland*, *Virginia*, *Maryland*, *Pennsylvania*, *Barbados*, *Long Island* and *Holland*, we understand that FRIENDS in General, continue in a good Degree of Brotherly Love and Unity; and that there is an OPENNESS in divers Places, both in *Great Britain* and beyond the Seas, to hear the Testimony of TRUTH; and some convinced; tho' in some few Places the Accounts are not so favourable. of the Press: city of Trunk



*Account of* THE Accounts of FRIEND'S SUFFERINGS brought in this Year, in *Sufferings.* England and Wales, do amount to Three Thousand Nine Hundred and Fourteen Pounds and upwards, mostly on Account of TITHES and CHURCH RATES, so called : and there is one Friend only continued Prisoner on that ACCOUNT.

*Advice to the* AND DEAR FRIENDS, inasmuch as the holy Scriptures are the external Means of conveying and preserving to us an Account of the Things most surely to be believed, concerning the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in the FLESH ; and the Fulfilling the PROPHECIES relating thereto. We therefore recommend to all Friends, especially ELDERS in the CHURCH, and Masters of Families, that THEY would, both by Example and Advice, impress on the Minds of the YOUNGER, a reverend Esteem of those Sacred Writings, and advise them to a frequent reading and meditating therein : And that MINISTERS as well as ELDERS and others, in all their Preaching, Writing and Conversing about the Things of God, do keep to the Form of sound Words, or Scripture-Terms ; and that none pretend to be WISE above what is there written ; and in such pretended WISDOM, go about to explain the Things of God, in the Words which Man's Wisdom teaches : But on the contrary, that you would at proper Times and Seasons, when you find your Minds rightly disposed thereunto, give the YOUTH to understand, that the same good Experience of the WORK of Sanctification, through the Operations of the Spirit of God, which the holy Scriptures plentifully bear Testimony to, is to be witnessed by Believers in all Generations, as well as by those in the first Ages of CHRISTIANITY ; in which Case, some Account of your own Experience will be helpful to them. And this we recommend as the most effectual Means for begetting, and establishing, in their Minds a firm Belief of the Christian Doctrine, in general, as well as the Necessity of the Aid and Help of the Operations of the holy Spirit of God in the Hearts of Men, in particular, contained in that most excellent Book the BIBLE ; and for the preserving them from being defiled with the many pernicious Notions and Principles, contrary to such sound DOCTRINE, which are at this Time industriously dispersed in the Nation, to the Reproach of the Christian Profession in general.

And forasmuch, as repeated Occasion hath been given of great Grief and Affliction to Friends, which hath caused the Way of TRUTH to be evil spoken of, by the launching out of divers under our Profession too far into the Affairs of this World, to their own Hurt, the Reproach of the Society, and wronging other Persons of their just Properties ; We recommend great Care and Circumspection to all Friends in this Respect, and in particular do refer to the ADVICES in the Yearly Epistles in 1710, 1724 and last Year ; and do desire Friends at their several Monthly Meetings, to use their utmost Endeavours by a watchful Eye, to prevent as much as in them lyes, all such unjust Practices and Scandals.

At this Time, as at several other Times in former Years, it hath been the Concern of this Meeting, to advise on particular Occasions, and





and in particular Cases ; which Occasions could not offer themselves in this Manner, if all Friends, who make Profession of the holy TRUTH with us, did duly regard the Teachings of the Grace of God in themselves ; and obey the Advice of *that wonderful Counsellor* : Because it is Isa. ix. 6. most certain, that all those who do or shall attend to the Teachings and Counsel of the holy Spirit of God, will find cause to say with the Psalmist, *Thy Commandment is exceeding broad*. For by it, all may be sufficiently instructed and *prepared to every good Work*. Psa. cxix. 96.  
2 Tim. ii. 21.

FINALLY, DEAR FRIENDS,

Our Beginning was in the Spirit, and our comfortable Fellowship is *Conclusion.* under the holy Influences of it. Therefore, let all be diligent in waiting on God for the Renewings thereof, and watching in it, whereby the Snares of the *Evil One* may be seen and avoided ; and we continue a People to the Praise of his Name, who hath called us out of Darkness into his marvellous Light, and therein shine as his Children before the World, And we earnestly pray the Father of all our Mercies, may keep you blameless unto the Day of the Coming of his Son our Lord Jesus Christ ; in the Fellowship of whose Spirit we salute You, and remain

Your Friends and Brethren.

*Signed in and on the Behalf of the Yearly-Meeting in London, the  
14th of the Fourth Month, 1728.*

By Alexander Arscott,

*Clerk of the Meeting this Year,*





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THE  
EPISTLE  
FROM THE

Yearly-Meeting

Of *Friends and Brethren*, held in *London*, by  
Adjournment, from the 26th Day of the  
Third Month, to the 30th Day of the same,  
inclusive, 1729.

*To the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings of Friends  
and Brethren in Great Britain and elsewhere.*

Dear *Friends and Brethren*,

IN the Love of our Heavenly Father, we salute you, signifying, that in  
this our *Annual Assembly*, the Light of his glorious Countenance hath  
graciously been afforded to us; and under the Blessing thereof, the  
Affairs of his Church have been carried on amongst us in much Love,  
Peace and Condescension.

By *Accounts* brought from the several *Quarterly and Monthly Meetings* in  
*England*, and by *Epistles* from *Wales, North-Britain, Ireland, Holland,*  
*Rhode-Island, Long-Island, Pensilvania, Maryland, North-Carolina, Barbadoes,*  
and *Antigua*; and also by the verbal *Accounts* of our *Friends Joshua Feilding*  
and *Samuel Bownas*, who have lately, seperately, visited the *Meetings* of  
*Friends* in *America*, also some *Places* where no *Friends* do dwell, and where  
no *Meetings* had before been: We have the comfortable and satisfactory *Ac-*  
*count*, that *Truth* doth prosper, and in many *Places*, there is an *Openness*  
among the *People*, not only to hear, but also to receive the *Testimony*  
thereof: And that *Friends* are generally in *Peace* and *Unity* one with  
another.

We



We are also particularly informed, that on the Continent of *America*, there is a very great Increase of the Number of Friends, among whom the Affairs of *Truth* are well managed, and that there is a Spring of living and sound Ministry raised in divers Parts of those *Plantations*; which we heartily wish and desire, may be a Means to provoke and stir up Friends in general, to a fervent Zeal and Concern for the Honour and Glory of the Lord our God, and the Gospel of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath been graciously pleased, not only to gather us to be a People, but hath also hitherto preserved us, and by the Arm of his mighty Power, hath wrought wonderfully for our Deliverance from many grievous Burdens and Oppressions which our Elders laboured under.

The Accounts of the *Sufferings* of Friends brought in this Year in *England* and *Wales*, do amount unto *Four Thousand one Hundred and thirty Pounds* and upwards, mostly on Account of *Tithes*, and *Church-Rates* so called: There is at present no Friend Prisoner on *Truths* Account, that we hear of in this Kingdom, on which Occasion, we cannot but commemorate the Goodness of our God in this his merciful Dispensation, so different from the Lot of our Fathers, which we earnestly pray, may, by all of us, be remembered with deep Humility and Thankfulness.

All Friends every where, keep to the Lord's Power that gathered you to be a People that were not a People, that under the Work of it, you may be made what the Lord would have you to be; where every one of you may come clearly to see your Places and Services in the *Churches of Christ*, and from a real Sense of your Duty, be heartily engaged to stand by the Testimony which God hath given you to bear; that as good Stewards of the manifold Gifts he hath been pleased to bestow, you may be preserved faithful: And labour in that Ability to stir up one another in Love, and against the Evil One, who is labouring to sow his evil Seed of *Strife* and *Contention*, whereby he may divide in *Jacob*, and scatter in *Israel*, or by Coldness and Negligence, lead any from the Lord and the Light of his holy Spirit, wherein our Communion hath been and still is sweet and pleasant, in which as we are careful to walk, we can have no Fellowship with the unfruitful Works of Darkness, but are engaged to reprove them.

Dear Friends, many are the good and wholesome Advices which in former Years have been recommended from this Meeting, exhorting to Faithfulness and Perseverance in all Godliness and Honesty, yet to our Grief we find there are fresh Instances of great Shortness in coming up in the Practice thereof, particularly by some injuriously defrauding their Creditors of their *Just Debts*, and not performing their Word and Promise, which have occasioned grievous Complaints; Wherefore we desire and intreat, when any such Occasion of Reproach shall be, that whatsoever Monthly Meeting within the Compass whereof it may happen, they do not fail speedily to set righteous Judgment on the Head of the Transgressor.

And we would hope if Friends in their Monthly Meetings, should pursuant to the Direction of this Meeting in the Epistle 1708, appoint proper, sensible and honest Friends to visit their respective Members, it may in great Measure, prevent the Necessity of repeating the Advices which have been so frequently given. To which we find ourselves at this Time engaged, to add, and do request, that Friends in any Part of this Kingdom or other Place, where Provisions, and the Necessaries of Life are dear and scarce, or Sick-



ness doth remarkably afflict, would in proportion to such Scarcity or Affliction, exert their charitable Assistance to the *Poor*, which is our Christian Duty, as Stewards of the many Mercies wherewith the Lord hath intrusted us.

This *Meeting* being at this Time under a tender and religious Concern for the *Youth* among us, that the succeeding Generation may be preserved in the Way of *Truth*, and through the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, grow up therein, that when we are removed, they may stand in a faithful Testimony for the Lord, and be valiant in their Day for his Truth upon Earth.

Do earnestly recommend it to all Friends, as much as in them lyes, to prevent their Children and Servants from reading *Plays*, *Romances*, and all such Books as have any Tendency to lead their Minds from God, and draw their Youthful Affections to a Love of the World, and Desire after the Vanities and Evils that are therein.

And also to be very careful, to prevent their Children and Servants from reading vile and corrupt Books (some of which have been published of late) as manifestly tend to oppose and reject the divine Authority of the *Holy Scriptures*, and to introduce *Deism*, *Atbeism*, and all manner of *Infidelity* and *Corruption* both in Principle and Practice.

And likewise it ought to be the great Care and Concern of *Parents*, as they value the Wellfare of their Children and Posterity, and others who have Youth under their Care, that they endeavour, by their Example as well as Precept, to keep them from bad Company, for many have found by sad Experience, the Truth of that Saying of the Apostle, *Evil Communication doth corrupt good Manners*.

We again recommend the Advice given in the Year 1723, that Friends be diligent in attending First and Week Days Meetings, for the Worship of Almighty God, and that the Elders and Heads of Families, be good Examples therein, and bring their Children and Servants to them.

Finally *dear Friends*, approve your selves as the Children of the Light and of the Day, in all holy and christian Conversation among Men, whereby God will be glorified, the Inquirer informed, the Weak strengthned, the whole *Church* edified and comforted in the Spirit of the Lamb, by whom the Victory over the *World*, the *Flesh* and the *Devil* is obtained; and that thus the Ends of the Earth may be gathered, and all Flesh see his Salvation, is the hearty Prayer of your Friends and Brethren.

*Signed in and by Order of the YEARLY-MEETING,*

By John Wilson,

*Clerk this Year.*





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THE  
E P I S T L E  
FROM THE  
Yearly-Meeting,

Held in *LONDON*, by Adjournments, from the 23d of the Fifth Month 1763, to the 31st of the same, inclusive.

*To the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings of Friends and Brethren, in GREAT BRITAIN, IRELAND, and elsewhere.*

*Dearly beloved Friends and Brethren !*

WE have renewed Cause, in deep Thankfulness, to acknowledge the Continuance of divine Regard, manifested to us in this large Assembly ; and in a Sense of the refreshing Influences of that Love, which first gathered and united us into an heavenly Fellowship in our LORD JESUS CHRIST, we tenderly salute you.

The Salutation.

In a good degree of this pure and precious Love, we have been enabled to transact the Affairs of this Meeting, in brotherly Condescension and Concord, to our mutual Edification and Comfort.

State of the Meeting.

The Amount of Friends Sufferings in *England* and *Wales*, brought in this Year, being chiefly for Tithes, and those called Church-Rates, is Two Thousand Six Hundred and Sixty-nine Pounds and upwards ; and from *Ireland*, One Thousand Seven Hundred and Sixty-one Pounds and upwards.

Account of Sufferings.

By the Accounts received from the Quarterly and Monthly-meetings in *England*, and by Epistles from *Wales*, *North-Britain*, *Ireland*, *Holland*, *Rhode-Island* for *New-England*, *New-York*, *Pensylvania* and *New-Jersey*, *Maryland*, *Virginia*, *North-Carolina*, and *South-Carolina* ; and by the verbal Relation of a Friend lately return'd from a religious Visit to some Parts of *America*, we are informed, that the Churches are generally preserved

Of the Prosperity of Truth.





preserved in Peace and Unity ; that a lively Zeal is revived for the Maintenance of Discipline and good Order ; that there is a good Disposition and great Openness amongst the People in many Places ; and divers have been convinced of the blessed Truth.

Exhortation  
to Godliness.

As it is apparent that many, through the Flowings forth of INFINITE GOODNESS, are under a powerful Visitation from on high, into whose Hearts the divine Light hath so clearly shined, as to discover the Insufficiency of the strictest Observation of Ceremonies and human Traditions, which cannot make the Comers thereunto perfect, as pertaining to the Conscience.

These being engaged in an earnest Pursuit after never-failing Substance, are seeking that Bread the World knows not of, and looking out for a People, whose Affections are set on Things above, with whom they may unite in Spirit, and join in Worship to the MOST HIGH. The Eyes of many being turned towards us with this View, let us gird up the Loins of our Minds, be sober, and hope to the End, for the Grace which is to be revealed, walking in Godliness and Honesty in the Sight of all Men ; that by the Circumspection, Innocency and Purity of our Lives and Conversations, we may demonstrate we are not of the World, but are redeemed from its Spirit ; and having put on CHRIST, the Righteousness of Saints, are not making Provision for the Flesh, to fulfil the Lusts thereof : So shall we be Examples to those who are enquiring the Way to true Rest and Peace.

Exhortation  
to the Youth.

And, *dear young People*, as some of you, in many Places, have embraced the renewed Visitations of divine Love in your Hearts, and have, in degree, entred into Covenant with your CREATOR, strong is the Engagement we feel for your Preservation and Advancement in the Path of the Just ; that through the Power of divine Grace, and your faithful Obedience thereunto, you may become useful Members in the Body, and fill up the various Stations in the Church, to its Edification and your own lasting Advantage.

And the Youth in general we intreat ; That a constant Care be upon all your Minds, to press after the Power and Virtue of that heavenly Principle, in the Profession whereof most of you have had your Education. If you keep your Places therein, it will preserve you ; but if thro' Disobedience ye depart therefrom, ye forsake your own Mercies, and others will take your Crown. Remember the Children of *Abraham*, by deviating from the Steps of their Fathers, lost the Privileges and Blessings they would otherwise have been entitled to.

Caution to  
those who  
are busied  
in the Things  
of this World.

And we beseech you, who are engaging in the Affairs of this Life, that in the first Place, you seek carefully after His Favour, whose is the Earth and the Fulness thereof ; and hath promised to be found of those that seek Him early. Endeavour to build your Houses in His Wisdom, who alone can give Duration and Stability to every Blessing, and direct how to use them to His own Praise, and the solid Benefit of the favour'd Receiver. As ye abide in His Fear, you will have an Eye to a glorious Inheritance, and be kept from high expensive Living, and evil Emulation of others who may affect a splendid Appearance, and be preserved from the many Snares which are laid to increase the afflicting Instances of Folly and Misconduct.



May the holy Principle of Truth prevail in your Minds, whom PROVIDENCE hath entitled with Affluence, that your Inclinations and Affections may be rightly bounded, and not carried away, by a Perversion of the divine Bounty, into Pride, Indolence, or Extravagance ; which have led many to exceed their Ability, whereby they have brought Ruin upon themselves, Damage to those with whom they have been concerned, and great Affliction and Reproach to our Society.

Advice to  
the Rich.

We think it seasonable, at this Time, to renew our Exhortation, That Friends every where be especially careful to keep their Hands clear of giving Encouragement, in any shape, to the *Slave-trade*, it being evidently destructive to the natural Rights of Mankind ; who are all ransomed by one SAVIOUR, and visited by one divine Light, in order to Salvation : A Traffick calculated to enrich and aggrandize some, upon the Misery of others ; in its Nature abhorrent to every just and tender Sentiment, and contrary to the whole Tenor of the Gospel.

Caution  
against using  
the Slave-  
trade.

And, *dear Friends*, as it hath pleased the MOST HIGH, who ruleth in the Kingdoms of Men, so to influence human Affairs, that Peace is again Restored ; we earnestly desire, that an humble Sense of so great Mercy, may rest upon all our Minds : That, in a grateful Commemoration of His wonderful Kindness, who hath preserved these Kingdoms from the Desolation and Distress which attended divers other Countries, we may reverently acknowledge it is the LORD'S Doing, and ought to be marvelous in our Eyes : And, as the best Return for Favours received, let us, thro' divine Assistance, bring forth Fruits of an holy and blameless Conversation ; endeavouring to advance His righteous Kingdom amongst Mankind, that His Salvation may become our Walls and Bulwarks, in every Trial permitted to come upon us, by that God who judgeth the Earth.

Thankfulness  
acknowledg'd  
for the re-  
storing of  
Peace.

And although the Favour of Princes hath never been the Rule of our dutiful Submission and Fidelity to them, being bound by our religious Principles to a quiet and peaceable Conduct, even when under severe Sufferings ; yet inasmuch as the Obligations of Gratitude, for the Enjoyment of our religious and civil Liberties, are added to those of Duty, let their united Impressions engage all our Minds, to walk with great Circumspection and Integrity, evidencing an humble Thankfulness to the wise and gracious Disposer of Events ; and to the KING, the just Returns of Loyalty and Obedience, in every Part of our Conduct and Converse, carefully avoiding any Instance of indecent Freedom, either in Language or Behaviour.

Admonition  
to Obedience  
and Fidelity  
to the King.

And, *dear Brethren*, we recommend to every Individual, a sincere and solemn Enquiry into the State of your own Minds ; and beseech you, strive to enter in at the strait Gate, and live under the Yoke of CHRIST, walking in Reverence and godly Fear at all Times ; ever feeling after the Virtue and Power of Truth to season your Spirits, and keep you in Stillness of Mind, which will wean you from the Love of this World. Herein you will feel Drawings to meet with your Brethren for the Worship of God ; and, when you present your Bodies before the Lord, labour diligently after inward Silence, and Abstraction of Thought from all worldly Objects, that so you may feel the gentle Operation of the holy Seed, the Light and Leaven of the Kingdom. This will manifest the Ground from whence every Thought and Motion in the Mind proceeds,

An inward  
Enquiry into  
the State of  
the Mind re-  
commended.

and





and make a Separation between the precious and the vile, that which serveth God, and that which serveth Him not; and ye will clearly discern, that the Promise is to the one Seed, CHRIST, our Light and Life; who, as He prevails, bringeth all Things into due Subjection to Himself. Thus shall you be enabled to see into the Mystery of Redemption by Him, who worketh all in all; and to worship the God of the Spirits of all Flesh, in awful Silence, and in the Beauty of Holiness; and the LORD, the Messenger of the Covenant, being come to his Temple, an holy Sabbath is kept. And as you partake, Time after Time, of the divine Sweetness, you will find your Minds engaged to seek a further Advancement in Wisdom and Virtue, and the Necessity of daily walking with God, will evidently appear.

Caution  
against Re-  
misness in  
attending  
Meetings  
for Wor-  
ship.

We are jealous with a godly Jealousy, that many who are favoured with tender Visitations from above, relax their Care and Watchfulness when absent from religious Meetings, and thereby slide from under the humbling Power of Truth, which would preserve in Meekness, Stability, and holy inward Quiet, amidst the various Engagements and Provocations of this Life, and guard the Mind against wandering Imaginations, irregular Desires and Affections.

When those who have grieved the holy Spirit, through Inattention thereto, again retire with their Brethren to seek the LORD, they find their Minds clouded, their Thoughts roving, and no true Center or solid Peace: Hence Meetings appear to them heavy and unpleasant; the Time of Silence seems long and tedious; the Eye is out after instrumental Help, and instead of trusting in God with all the Heart, their Dependance is turned upon Man. This provokes the Holy One of *Israel*, who is jealous of His Honour, to with-hold his Favours and Blessings from such; and this we fear is one great Cause of the Loss which many have sustained: For whose Recovery, and the Restoration of ancient Beauty to the Churches every where, we are fervently engaged.

Were the Eyes of all truly turned towards the LORD, in humble Dependance upon Him alone for Help, many useful Instruments would doubtless be raised to fill up every Station in the Church with Propriety. Then the Cause of mourning and Complaint would cease, and the Repetition of particular Advices become less necessary; as the holy Unction, being received and rightly attended to, would teach us all Things that we ought to believe and practise.

2 Pet. iii.  
17, 18.

*Ye therefore, Beloved, seeing ye know these Things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the Error of the Wicked, fall from your own Steadfastness. But grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST: To Him be Glory both now and for ever. Amen.*

*Signed in and on Behalf of the Yearly-Meeting,*

**By Isaac Wilson,**

*Clerk to the Meeting this Year.*





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